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USNS Mercy, to depart supporting Pacific Partnership

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By U.S. Navy Capt. Tim Hinman, Commanding Officer, USNS Mercy Medical Treatment Facility

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Today the USNS Mercy Hospital Ship will depart for Pacific Partnership 2012. In addition to my hospital staff and the military sealift command civilian mariners, we will be joined by shipmates from Destroyer Squadron Seven staff, other military services (foreign and domestic), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As commanding officer of MTF USNS Mercy I am very proud of our incredibly capable crew and platform. We look forward to contributing our part through medical diplomacy on this very important mission. I look forward to forming new and renewing existing relationships, providing and developing capacity, and increasing interoperability and the ability to respond in crises.

Now in its seventh year, Pacific Partnership has become the largest annual humanitarian civic action (HCA) mission in the Asia Pacific region. Pacific Partnership is focused on building enduring relationships by working through and with host nations, partner nations and NGOs to enhance our collective ability and capacity to respond to natural disasters.

This year's mission is aptly themed, "Preparing in Calm to Respond in Crisis," and we hope to help all our host and partner nations do just that. We have been asked by Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Cambodia, along with our numerous partner nations, to work with together, exchange information, and help us all plan for unknown contingencies in the future.

I am particularly looking forward to going beyond what we have done in the past as part of our exchanges. For previous missions, surgeries have traditionally been performed by U.S. and partner providers aboard Mercy. This year the mission will provide opportunities to integrate host nation providers into performing surgeries, both on the ship and ashore, as a true exchange of expertise and practice that will greatly increase medical capacity and further solidify these relationships.

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In the military and especially in the medical community we often talk about global engagement and building partnerships. I can personally think of no better way to do that than these types of missions. Medicine is a universal language and has the ability to cross cultural divides and change lives. This ship is bringing together specialties across the full spectrum of what military medicine has to offer and as we embark on this journey, I'm confident we will take full advantage of what opportunities lay before us and collectively build a brighter future for those whose lives we are honored to touch.

U.S. Navy Capt. Tim Hinman, Commanding Officer, USNS Mercy Medical Treatment Facility

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Ronaldo Tiangco

When is the USNS Mercy expected to reach Philippine shores? and for how long? I want to have my polypectomy done by the Hospital Ship's crew...I've been suffering from this since 1996 and it is my desire to have my medical case resolved right there in this famous Hospital Ship. Please do inform me on how to apply for medical surgery onboard.. Thank you

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